P O I T I C  T O U C H

According to legend, Erice, son of Venus and Neptune, founded a small town on top of a mountain (750 metres above sea level) more than three thousand years ago. The founder of modern history — i.e. the recording of events in a methodic and chronological sequence as they really happened without reference to mythical causes — the great Thucydides (~500 B.C.), writing about events connected with the conquest of Troy (1183 B.C.) said: «After the fall of Troy some Trojans on their escape from the Achaeans arrived in Sicily by boat and as they settled near the border with the Sicanians all together they were named Elymi: their towns were Segesta and Erice.» This inspired Virgil to describe the arrival of the Trojan royal family in Erice and the burial of Anchise, by his son Enea, on the coast below Erice. Homer (~1000 B.C.), Theocrsus (~300 B.C.), Polybius (~200 B.C.), Virgil (~50 B.C.), Hervader (~20 B.C.), and others have all celebrated this magnificent spot in Sicily in their poems. During seven centuries (XIII-XIX) the town of Erice was under the leadership of a local oligarchy, whose wisdom assured a long period of cultural development and economic prosperity which in turn gave rise to the many churches, monasteries and private palaces which you see today.

In Erice you can admire the Castle of Venus, the Cyclopean Walls (~800 B.C.), the Inviolable Castle, Palazzo Pretorio (~1500 B.C.), the Gothic Cathedral (~1300 A.D.). Erice at present a mixture of ancient and medieval architecture. Other masterpieces of ancient civilization are to be found in the neighbourhood: at Motya (Phoenician), Segesta (Elyman), and Selinunte (Greek). On the Aegean Islands — theatre of the decisive naval battle of the first Punic War (264-241 B.C.) —suggestive neolithic and palaeolithic vestiges are still visible: the grottos of Favignana, the carvings and murals of Levanzo. Splendid beaches are to be found at San Vito Lo Capo, Scopello, and Cornino, and a wild and rocky coast around Monte Cofano: all at least one hour’s drive from Erice.

More information about the «Ettore Majorana» Foundation and Centre for Scientific Culture can be found on the WWW at the following address: http://www.cescem.info.it

• PLEASE NOTE
Participants should arrive in Erice on July, 20 no later than 5 pm.